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FEDORA INTRODUCED TO HER NEW HOME AT GENERAL ROSKIN'S.

THE ENGLISHMAN IN RUSSIA.

A TALE OF THE TIME OF CATHERINE II.
CHAPTER XXXIII.—FEDORA'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED.—HOME.

I WAS half beside myself for joy; and it was not until my wild emotions had subsided, and my

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father had gently withdrawn me from the crowd to his temporary lodgings, that I saw how great and sad an alteration the eight years of our separation had made in him. He had become thin, and bent, and feeble; and when the first excite-

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ment of our meeting was over, he seemed, even to my inexperienced perceptions, care-worn and dejected.

But he made light of his symptoms of decay, and spoke cheerfully. He was not ill, he said: a little shattered perhaps, with exposure to the hardships of a soldier's life. But that life was over now, and he should have nothing to do but gather strength again; and now that he had got his little Feodora to be his companion and nurse—if he should need one—he should get on famously, never fear.

"I did not know you had left off being a soldier," I said.

"Ah no! I left that and many other things to tell you; but all in good time. Before we begin to talk of these, however, we must prepare for our journey home."

"And our home—will that be at St. Petersburg?"

"Oh no, Feodora; it is a long way from St. Petersburg, beyond Moscow."

Not much more passed then, for my father was anxious to get away from Cronstadt; and when we were together, he seemed lost in thought. I, too, had something to think about; and it was not till several days after my first landing, and when we were journeying to Moscow, that our tongues seemed fairly loosened. By this time, I had become used to my father's worn and aged looks, and—remembering that eight years had made a difference in me as well as in him—I began to hope and to persuade myself that he was not so greatly altered, after all.

"And so, Feodora," he said, one day, when our journey had commenced, "my cousin Archibald took no more notice of you, and did not invite you to his house. Ah well, it is as well that you have not kept grand company in England. You might else have learned to despise your father's poverty."

"Poverty!" I repeated. And yet I was not greatly surprised to hear my father speak of his poverty. I had even signs of it, though he had striven to hide them from me, in his faded uniform, in the comparatively cheap lodgings in which we had stayed at St. Petersburg, in his haste to leave that expensive capital and to commence our homeward journey, and in the scanty and small presents he made to the *yamstchiks*, or post drivers, over and above their legal demand. Two circumstances only had softened my apprehensions. One was, the bountiful and ungrudging way in which he replaced my lost wardrobe before we left St. Petersburg: I little knew then, how nearly this expenditure exhausted his purse. The other circumstance was the comfort in which we travelled: but this, my father afterwards explained, he owed to the kindness of a former military superior—General Roskin—who had lent him one of his travelling carriages.

"Yes, poverty, darling," said my father, with a heavy sigh; and then he told me that he had felt compelled, by growing infirmities, to retire from active service; and that the small property which he trusted would have kept us from want, and would have descended to me, had been wrested from him, because of some informality in its possession. He told me too that, in prospect of my return to Russia, his patron, General Roskin,

had given him permission to reside in a small house on his estate, where his scanty retiring pension might be sufficient for our future support.

I saw that it required an effort in my poor father to tell me this; but when I looked up and smiled—though my heart was heavy—he cast off his gloom and smiled too. And so we journeyed on, and talked of England till we were sleepy, and then we slept; and when we woke, we talked again of our former journey between Moscow and St. Petersburg, and of my mother, and poor Zef, till tears came to my eyes; and then of my perilous voyage and shipwreck, and my fellow passenger, whose name I remembered was Penrhyn Clifford, who had rescued me from my berth when the little cabin was half filled with water. And then we spoke of our plans, or of my father's plans for the future, little dreaming then how soon they would all fade away. At length, after many days' hard travelling, and resting at night in the wretched post-houses on the road, we reached our journey's end; and our borrowed travelling carriage was sent on to its owner at Semeonovskoye.

I shall not describe our home. It was not such as I had fancied it would be; but it mattered little; I was once more with my father, and in my mother's native country and my own.

Our only servants were an old serf and his wife, from whom I soon recovered the Russ I had lost in England; and our only near neighbours with whom we held any intercourse were the priest of the little town and his wife. Grand neighbours we had, however, a few versts off; and not many days after our return, came a handsome carriage, drawn by six horses, all very fine, as the story books say; and out of it stepped a tall military officer, and a lady, both of whom kissed my cheeks, and who were introduced to me by my father as General and Madame Roskin.

They spoke very kindly to my father and very pleasantly to me; and before they went away, we had promised to return the visit, and spend a week at their mansion at Semeonovskoye.

We went; but I shall not describe our visit: I have other matters to write about here.

For a little while, my father's health seemed to revive, and we were very, very happy. I had no other companions; but with him by my side, I cared for no other society. We walked together, read to each other, sometimes worked together in our garden, and, at others, had enough to do in living over again, in our thoughts and conversation, the events through which we had passed in the long years of our separation.

Among other matters, I learned in this way that my father had once saved the life of General Roskin; and this accounted for the friendship which subsisted between the rich Russian proprietor and the poor English officer, and for the many acts of kindness which we received, without an overburden of obligation. Indeed, from my father's report, I soon formed a favourable opinion of the General, as well as felt a grateful reverence for him; and it was with a feeling of pain which I need not describe, that I afterwards heard him spoken of as arbitrary and cruel. I was sure that my father never thought thus of him.

I learned at this time, also, more of my father's

early history and adventures than I had ever before known, as well as of the unkindness of his cousin Archibald, who refused to exert himself to obtain a pardon, which would have enabled my father to return to his native country, instead of my being recalled to him in the land of his adoption.

But more than anything else, my father delighted to speak of a poor Polish nobleman with whom he had served in several campaigns, and who was at last killed in an engagement in which my father also received a severe wound. The poor count and my father were very dear friends; and their friendship had its origin in a personal dispute, in which the young nobleman showed so much forbearance and generosity that my father was melted towards him, and sought his forgiveness. The result was honourable to them both; but more especially, my father said, it was serviceable to himself; for the count was not only a Lutheran—of this my father was before aware—but an humble and ardent Christian. My father himself had ever been too enlightened to embrace the superstitions of the Greek Church, or, as he said, too stubborn to give up for them the prejudices of early education; and he was too devout, or too well convinced of their divine authority, not to reverence the scriptures; but, as he afterwards confessed, it was in his continued and daily ripening intercourse with his friend, that the light of heavenly truth broke in upon his soul.

It was pleasant to hear my father speak of the happiness he thereafter enjoyed in Christian communion with his friend; how they met, as often as they were able, for reading the scriptures and private prayer; how they assisted each other in stemming the torrent of ridicule to which they were exposed from their brother officers; and how, when dangers surrounded them, they encouraged each other to confidence in their God and Saviour.

It may well be supposed that my father did not suffer these references to his lost friend to pass by without anxiously speaking of my own eternal interests; and if ever any regret escaped his lips at the disappointment of his earthly hopes, especially of the hope he had entertained of eventually returning to his own country, it was on account of the mental and spiritual darkness by which we were surrounded.

More than once, indeed, he spoke seriously of leaving our present retreat, and joining the colony of Moravian Brethren at Sarepta; but with his exhausted resources the distance was insurmountable; “and besides this, darling,” he said, when he recurred to the subject for the last time, “we know where it is written that they are the true worshippers who worship God in the spirit and in truth, whether they worship him in mountain or in temple, in a crowd or alone. Let us worship him ‘in spirit and in truth,’ and then we may trust to the promise that where only two meet in the Saviour’s name, there he also is.”

I cannot describe, however, how anxious he was to guard me against what he plainly perceived were errors and superstitions in the national Russian Church. “I do not mean to say,” he argued, “that all is error, or that there may be no excellencies in this church. I have met with excellent and godly men in its communion and among its

priests, even as in olden times, in idolatrous Israel, there were found seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to Baal. And there is saving truth here, amidst much error—the divinity and atonement of the blessed Saviour, and the need of faith and repentance; but then these tedious and pernicious ceremonies, which are, at best, bodily exercises which profit little; these crossings and genuflexions which weary but do not instruct; and this reverence paid to pictures, amounting almost to idolatry; these prayers to saints—I am weary of it all, Feodora, and long for such a season of soul refreshment as I once enjoyed in that Moravian settlement among the simple-hearted Christians there. Read the eighty-fourth psalm, darling.”

So I opened the Bible and read the psalm, while sorrowful tears stood in his eyes, till, coming to its closing verses, his dejection vanished.

“It is all true, Feodora,” he said—“all quite true: ‘The Lord God is a sun and a shield, the Lord will give grace and glory;’ and blessed are all they that put their trust in HIM.”

CHAPTER XXXIV.

FEODORA’S NARRATIVE CONTINUED.—DEATH.

I WAS one day—a day never to be thought of by me but with sad remembrance—sitting alone in my chamber, when a loud cry reached and startled me. It was repeated, and I hastened to the room below, where I found our two old servants, with frantic gestures, standing over the insensible body of my father.

I hastened to raise him, but all life seemed to have departed; his eyes were glazed and fixed, his lips and cheeks bloodless, and his hands and forehead cold, deathlike, and rigid.

He was not dead, however: he recovered, after a time, from his deadly swoon; but it was only a short respite to me. From that time he knew that his days were numbered and drawing to a close.

Through days and nights, I knew not how few or how many—but I bless God that while they lasted I felt neither weariness nor fear—I watched by my dying father’s bedside. He was speechless at first; but, oh with what unutterable tenderness he gazed on me as he lay! and with what an earnest though feeble pressure he returned the grasp of my trembling hand, folded in his own. At length—and I bless God for that too—the power of speech returned; and then, with what wisdom and love did he counsel me; and with what fervency did his pious prayers for me rise from his full heart.

The priest Petrovitch came to visit us in this trouble. He was, as I have said, our only acquaintance, nearer than Semeonovskoye; but my father had endured, rather than courted his company. Nevertheless, he was kind and sympathising; and when my father refused to submit to the ceremonies prescribed for the dying by the Greek Church, the priest acquiesced in the decision. He cared very little, I believe, about religion, and had but little faith in the creed he professed.

As my father’s weakness increased, he lost again the power of speech; but even then, as he lay, supported by pillows and gasping for breath,

his hand was constantly on his open Bible ; and from time to time he turned over its leaves, and laid his finger on many a passage, while his eye imploringly met mine. And then it was that I first began to perceive the deep meaning of those exceeding great and precious promises which are written for those who believe in Jesus.

And then he died.

I cannot go on. I have but a faint recollection of many subsequent events. I saw the priest Petrovitch, and heard his voice, but knew neither what he said or did. I dimly recall the figures of two other priests, who—in the death chamber, lighted with tapers—read and read and read, in a dull low tone, from morning to night, and from night to morning, till the day that shut out from me for ever on earth the sight of a countenance which for me had never a frown. I think I can recall the soft and gentle tones of the priest's young wife, who came to comfort me, and to relieve me of some of the lighter burdens which pressed on me then. I hope I am not ungrateful; but I dare not say that I fully remember this.

And they buried him—my own dear, loving father—my only friend in that wide, desolate land—my only friend in the world. May God have forgiven me the rebellious and reproachful thoughts and feelings and wishes which then strove for utterance—how I fear I charged the Almighty with cruelty, and demanded to be stricken with death also.

The day of his burial I only faintly remember; I was as one in a dream. They told me afterwards—the priest and his wife told me—that I performed my part well. *Performed my part!* But they did not mean to wrong or wound me. Yet do I dimly recollect a voice sounding soothingly in my ears, and helping to calm my bursting, breaking heart, as I bent for the last time over him. It did not surprise me—nothing would have surprised me then—that the voice uttered words of comfort in my father's own native tongue. It seemed right and proper and natural.

The next day I understood it better, when he came to comfort me—I mean he who had whispered to me over my father's corpse. I felt then that God had answered my father's prayers, and raised up for me a friend in my utmost need.

Before this, I had also heard from Semeonovskoye. Madame had written to me, and offered me a home; and I had accepted it. Ere many more days passed away, I was preparing to remove. I had little to take with me. My father's sword and his few books; my mother's remaining reliques; this was nearly all.

CHAPTER XXXV.

FEODORA'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED.—A NEW HOME.

SEMEONOVSKOYE—I can write now with a freer pen—Semeonovskoye, my future home, was a large and comfortable Russian mansion, built on gently rising ground and surrounded with pasture land, through which flowed a considerable stream, a tributary of the Don. In one part of the valley this stream spread out into a small lake, forming the centre of extensive pleasure grounds. The sides of the distant hills were hidden with woods which crowned their tops; while far away, south-

ward, were extensive plains, stretching onwards with little intermission, for hundreds of miles towards the Black and Caspian Seas.

The country around Semeonovskoye is very lovely; and though, at the time of my removal thither, the beauty of summer had passed away, there was much which—in spite of my heaviness of heart—I could scarcely fail to admire. Groves of luxuriant trees, verdant fields, large flocks of sheep, and herds of cattle; the calm lake, and the stream winding through the valley like a silver thread; the village, half hidden among the trees; the village church; a convent not far distant; the large mansion itself, with its bright green painted roof and white walls and red chimneys, its extensive and rambling offices, its large gardens and shrubberies; and a bright blue, cloudless, sunny sky; these were some of the features of the landscape which opened upon me, as at a rapid pace the carriage in which I was seated drove towards Semeonovskoye. For a moment I forgot my loss.

I was met in the hall of the mansion by my future protectress. It matters little, yet I would fain describe her. I think I have rarely seen a more beautiful countenance than that of Madame Roskin, nor a figure and bearing more regally dignified. And yet, it may be, hers was beauty which betokened more masculine firmness than feminine grace. Her broad clear forehead; her dark and beautifully arched eyebrows; her dark eyes, flashing at times with otherwise controlled excitement, rather than beaming with tenderness; her firm classic lips; her very step, slow and majestic; all denoted qualities which, though capable of inspiring admiration in an equal or a superior—if Madame Roskin could have acknowledged a superior—were also suggestive of stern authority to those over whom she ruled.

Such thoughts as these had passed through my mind at the earliest stage of our acquaintance; and they involuntarily and unwelcomely presented themselves again as I leaned on her arm; and my heart beat more quickly, I fear, as I remembered that, from a friend—poor and humble truly, but yet an acknowledged friend, and equal in all but wealth—I had sunk into the position of a hired servant.

And yet never, perhaps, was more generous and disinterested kindness shown to a poor and friendless, oh, and otherwise homeless orphan, than I experienced from this lady, not then only, but even afterwards, through the comparatively short period of our intimate connexion; and when I think of her tragic history, I am filled with very bitter sorrow. But I will not anticipate the future events of my narrative.

With almost maternal, or, let me rather say, with sisterly kindness—for Madame Roskin was not very many years older than myself—and with graceful courtesy, my protectress led me to the apartment which was thenceforward to be my own. She had been only too lavish in her bounty. The room and its furniture were luxurious to excess; and from the windows, which opened upon an ornamental balcony, filled with rich and lovely flowers, was spread a glorious prospect of hill and valley, wood and lake, then bathed in the quiet light and varied hues of an autumnal sunset.

I turned in surprise and thankfulness towards

my benefactress, but she had quietly retired ; and when afterwards I attempted to express my gratitude, she made very light of the benefits she conferred.

My father's Bible lay open before me that night, and a letter which I had found in his desk, sealed and directed to me. I had read the letter before, in spite of blinding tears. I read it now with greater composure. In the catastrophe which I have hereafter to relate, this letter, with all that I possessed besides, was abandoned and annihilated ; but, ere then, almost every sentence in it was indelibly impressed on my memory. It ran thus :

" **MY DEAREST FEODORA** :—When you read this, the hand that writes it will be cold in death, and you will be sorrowing. That time, I sometimes think, is not far distant ; and but for thoughts of you, my dear, dear child, I should not regret that I have so nearly accomplished, as an hireling, my day. Not, alas ! that I have performed even a hireling's work. Mine seems to have been a wasted life, Feodora ; and if the sentence were pronounced against me, 'Thou wicked and slothful servant,' I could not but own it to be justly deserved. But I remember that even those who enter the Lord's vineyard, though it be at the eleventh hour, are not utterly cast out ; and those blessed words also, which we have read together, 'there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared.' And therefore, though I dare not look forward to the time of my departure with transport, yet I bless God I can contemplate it with composure, trusting in the merits of my Redeemer. I write this now, my dear child, that you may not hereafter sorrow as others who have no hope.

" It is not of myself, however, dearest Feodora, that I took up my pen to write ; but of you. Very often does it oppress me with grief when I think of you as an orphan, desolate and destitute : and only can I find comfort when I turn to the promises of my God in his word, which encourage me to leave my fatherless child with him who has declared himself the Helper and the Judge of such as you will be.

" Dear Feodora, your father, though dead, yet speaks to you in these written lines, and prays you to trust in God. Read the Bible, dearest ; it has been your father's comfort in distress of mind, and through worldly trials and losses : read it with prayer for the blessed Spirit's enlightenment.

" I wrote of you just now as desolate and destitute. I recall the words. They can be neither desolate nor destitute who have God for their friend.

" Nor do I think that you will be left altogether desolate in earthly friendships. I would not have you lead a dependent life ; and your services will probably be sought for and remunerated, and your talents usefully employed as an instructress."

I need not repeat what more my dear father wrote on this subject.

" Our friends at Semeonovskoye will, I think," he added, " further your interests and assist you with their advice, in this direction."

As my readers are already informed, they had done more than this.

" A few words more, dearest Feodora. I am no theologian. I know but little of forms of faith ; my life has been mostly spent, as you know, in camps, and not in colleges. Yet, when I compare what I meet with in God's own blessed truth, with what I see around me, I dare not wish for you to enter the communion of a church which you may at some time be persuaded to believe is your natural home. You know what I think on these matters, however ; and may God help you to do what is right. 'Commit your way unto him, and he shall bring it to pass.' * * * *

More there was in the letter which I need not repeat ; and many tears fell on it that night—my first in a new home—as I sat reading it by the light of a silver lamp.

I looked around me, and thought of the kindness of my protectress ; and it seemed as though my father's words had already been fulfilled. I had not been left destitute and desolate : no, I had not.

And when I turned to the passages he had marked, and read such encouragements and promises as those to which my father had referred, and multitudes of others besides, hope revived in my heart, and peace. I understood something of what is meant in such words as these :—" When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I, the Lord will hear them ; I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys ; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water."

A RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR IN PARIS.

At the present day, when public attention has so recently been directed towards the Russian ambassadors to the Peace Congress at Paris, and when the grim courtesies of Count Orloff are duly chronicled by newspaper correspondents, it will not be without interest to review the proceedings of a very different embassy which found its way from Moscow to the French capital a good many years ago. The circumstances we are about to narrate show the barbarous manners of the Russian nobility of a former age, and are given upon the authority of a manuscript belonging to a collection of the state papers of the French minister Colbert, found in one of the cabinets of his bureau, and preserved in the "Bibliothèque Imperiale" of Paris.

In the middle of the seventeenth century, the relations between France and Russia were singularly strange and distant. The court of Louis Quatorze had hardly ever heard of that of the Muscovite czar, and in return the latter was profoundly ignorant of the manners of the court of France. Occupied exclusively with his political relations with the east, the czar Alexis Michaelowitch knew comparatively nothing of what was passing in the courts of western monarchs, and had seldom occasion to inquire. It was by means of Poland that the Muscovite potentate first came in contact with the Roman Catholic and Protestant monarchs of the west. In Poland the Slavonic character had become modified by western

civilization. The Poles were a more intellectual and ever a braver people than their barbaric neighbours. They possessed an indomitable spirit of independence, even aspiring to dominion; and as Russia had the same appetite for aggrandisement, the two nations were consequently often at war. Both countries were compelled occasionally to apply to other states for succour, or else to solicit them to observe a friendly neutrality while the contests between them proceeded.

It was upon an occasion when Russia needed foreign interference with regard to Poland that Alexis, in 1654, sent an ambassador to Paris. He had maintained a quarrel of long standing with Casimer, king of Poland. Having been informed that the queen of that monarch presumed upon her relationship with Louis XIV, to threaten him with the interference of France, he took the step of accrediting an ambassador to advocate his interests. The czar selected for his representative Prince Constantine Metcherski, one of the more active and influential of his courtiers. A Russian embassy at this period was by no means the costly establishment it has since become. According to Muscovite custom, the envoy trusted to the court to which he was accredited for indemnification in respect of the outlay of his journey, just as it was customary with the czar to be at the cost of the visit of any foreign ambassador to his court. All that Alexis gave to his representative, on the occasion we are noticing, was a *vaticum* in the shape of a portentous autograph letter, addressed to his Majesty the king of France, and a book in which he had indited a full account of his reasons for declaring war against Casimer. The ambassador was accompanied by a secretary, an interpreter, and a number of attendants. With this suite he embarked for Holland.

In due season the French court received from the states-general intelligence of the arrival in their country of the envoy, who had been received with the distinction due to a great foreign potentate. Soon afterwards, Count de Brienne, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to Louis XIV, was visited at Paris by a strange-looking personage in furs and sables, who arrived in the capital from Rouen. The foreigner proved to be one Wilner, the interpreter attached to the suite of Prince Metcherski, by birth a Fleming, but a naturalised Russian. He spoke both the Flemish and Muscovite languages, but no French. At the period of which we write, it appears that there was not to be found in the Parisian capital a Frenchman who understood the Russian tongue; but an old banker named Trisse was discovered who could speak Flemish. By his aid the government ascertained from Wilner that an ambassador from the court of Moscow had arrived at Havre, but that his Excellency, in accordance with Muscovite etiquette, awaited to be conducted to Paris, and to be released from the personal costs of the embassy from the time it set foot on French ground.

The Count de Brienne received this singular proposition with surprise, but dealt with it with the gravity of a diplomatist. He made Wilner comprehend that the French government could not accede to the Russian representative's request in the form in which it was made; but that after

his arrival at Paris, the question of indemnification would be considered. The Count de Brienne, however, while he thus dismissed the interpreter, at the same time gave orders that a reception, worthy the dignity of the French crown, should be accorded to the apparently destitute embassy at Havre.

On the receipt of advices from Paris, the Russian legate proceeded on his journey, and reached St. Denis, where he put up at a humble inn. Here he sojourned, waiting to learn the course which the French government would follow with regard to his official presence. He was allowed to remain at the inn eight days ere any notice of his arrival took place. Ultimately the French government decided to appropriate the sum of 2400 livres to the entertainment of the embassy. This point being adjusted, the royal carriages were driven, in charge of an official of the court, to the inn at which the Russians were staying, and the envoy and his interpreters were crammed into the first vehicle, while the second accommodated his secretary and the rest of the suite. Eight lacqueys, in green livery, mounted behind the carriages, and the *cortège* started. When they reached the capital, the eight footmen descended from their foot-boards, and took the singular course of marching the rest of the way like pages by the sides of the carriages. The Parisians were not a little surprised at the sight of these long-bearded foreigners in their strange costumes of furs, caftans, and velvet bonnets, bordered with sable.

The embassy was lodged in a magnificently furnished hotel in the Rue Dauphine, and supplied with a retinue of attendants, including a cook from the royal *cuisine* and a *maitre d'hôtel*. After the lapse of four more days, the two state carriages again stood before the hotel in the Rue Dauphine, ready to conduct the ambassador to an audience with the king. The embassy entered the carriages in the same order as before; but now the interpreters chose ostentatiously to display a portentous document enveloped in red taffeta, with large red pendant seals of wax, purporting to be the letter of the czar. The exhibition of the imperial missive dangling out of the window of the carriage was persevered in up to the time of the arrival of the ambassador at the palace.

Louis XIV, attended by his court, awaited in the grand *salon* of his palace the appearance of his expected visitor. In due form Prince Metcherski was ushered into the presence of the king. And now began a tedious formality. With many ceremonious obeisances, the ambassador took from the hands of his secretary the much vaunted letter of his sovereign, and kneeling presented the missive, reciting at the same time a long list of titles claimed by the czar Alexis Michaelovitch. The envoy having duly gone through this formality, the titles had of course to be repeated through the mouths of the interpreters. The compliments also passed in return by Louis, upon his correspondent the czar Alexis, had to be translated from French into Flemish and from Flemish into Russian. But when Louis had said all that he thought necessary, it was observed that the Russian envoy manifested much uneasiness and dissatisfaction. On being asked the cause, he said that his Majesty the king of France had not risen

from his seat on hearing the titles of the czar, nor had his Majesty repeated them after the interpreter—a custom which the courts of the sultan, the emperor of Germany, the shah of Persia, and the khan of Tartary, had never failed to observe. So soon as the king understood in what respect he had erred, he caused the Count de Brienne to explain that it was not the custom in France for the king to go through the punctilios expected; but that, in order to prove his high esteem for the czar, he would uncover. His Majesty accordingly raised for an instant the jewelled bonnet which he wore, and returned it to its place. Prince Metcherski, on behalf of his sovereign, expressed himself satisfied, and thus ended the audience.

On the day following the interview accorded to Prince Metcherski by the king, our troublesome envoy demanded a second audience, in order to deliver to his Majesty the autograph book composed by the czar, containing the reasons for going to war with Poland. He was informed, however, that such communications with majesty were not accorded every day, and that he must therefore transmit the manuscript volume to the secretary of state. This, however, would not do. The czar's orders, it was replied, were express, that the book should be given by the ambassador in *propria persona*, and he persisted in urging the importance of the point, but without avail.

A fortnight passed, and the Muscovite still remained at the Hôtel Dauphine. The grand chamberlain of the court had politely offered to send his carriage in order that Prince Metcherski and his suite might visit the Louvre and other objects of curiosity in Paris; but the proposal was declined. At length it began to be bruited abroad that the odd looking occupants of the Hôtel Dauphine were addicted to excesses exceedingly discreditable in personages of their rank and position. The envoy's custom of an afternoon, it appeared, was, with certain members of his suite, to get disgracefully inebriated. They drank, on the testimony of the *maitre d'hôtel*, no less than eight pints of brandy per day, and while in a state of intoxication would quarrel with each other violently, even resorting to fighting. More than once the drunken ambassador was seen to strike his attendants. Such disturbances proved of daily occurrence, and began to attract the notice of the public. The envoy showing no disposition to depart from Paris, he was one day visited by an official, specially commissioned to inform him from the king, that he was at liberty to quit the metropolis without delay. Far from feeling any annoyance at the somewhat abrupt hint, the envoy answered that he could not leave until he had received from the hands of the king himself, his Majesty's reply to the letter of the czar.

"You will obtain it through the secretary of state," replied the officer.

"Why," exclaimed the envoy, "my sovereign would take my head off if I dared to receive the royal letter from any other hands than those of the king of France."

Unwilling to draw down so serious a punishment upon the head of the prince, but, nevertheless, anxious to be rid of him, the Count de Brienne arranged that he should have a final audience of

the king, under the pretext of "kissing hands" on his departure. A day was appointed, and on the occasion the youthful monarch of France delivered to the ambassador the desiderated reply to the letter of the czar Alexis. The document was highly emblazoned, and its brilliant appearance delighted the eyes of the envoy, who caused it to be displayed with great ostentation on his return from the court.

There was yet another matter that could not well be dispensed with. In the year 1635, a predecessor of the Prince Metcherski, who reached Paris from Moscow, and had audience of Louis XIII at Chantilly, received as a mark of respect a weighty chain of gold with the king's portrait suspended. Louis XIV felt himself bound by etiquette to follow the precedent, and a chain was ordered to be presented to Prince Metcherski. The exchequer of France proving, however, to be extremely low, the lord treasurer so far tampered with the orders of the king as to cause the crown jeweller to shorten the gift by sundry of its golden links. Soon afterwards the embassy departed on their journey to Moscow.

ECHOES OF WESTMINSTER HALL

NO. I.—AXE AND HAMMER.

THERE is no music like the voice of an echo. Not that the sweetness, richness, or grandeur of its tones gives it pre-eminence, but the mystery which covers it; and the idea suggested of some invisible spirit or spirits in the distance, giving back responses to the words uttered, or sounds produced, impart to it a strange and fascinating interest. The memory of many and many a pleasant spot, in fair old England, will recur to our readers, where not long since, amidst hills and woods, and beside river streams, they whiled away some pleasant moments, abstracted from busy toils and feverish cares, in listening to strains evoked from the haunts of an echo, by bugle note or human words. How it rolled, and rolled, and died away! thunders softening into whispers. And welcome are the reverberations now caught by the mental ear, and the pictures of the landscape adorned with mountain, field, and flood, with cottage, tower, and tree, now present to the mental eye, as the quondam tourist, in his easy chair, with loose coat and slippers feet, beside his warm fireside, goes over his travels afresh, repeating in fancy what has been his in realization.

Perhaps of nobler echoes than any our own land can boast of, not a few of our readers may be thinking, as the title page of these papers catches their eye—the Lurley on the Rhine, with its majestic sevenfold voice, throwing down upon your ear, in that romantic rock gorge of the grandest of German rivers, successive undulations of mysterious sound—or the Koenigsee, not far from Salzburg, that most enchanting of all enchanting lakes, where rock and mountain, forest and water, are arranged in forms of perfect beauty and incomparable grandeur, and where nature's rarest music mingles with nature's rarest painting.

But not of such echoes will these chapters treat. To no romantic spot do we purpose to conduct you, but through the crowded, noisy, unpicturesque thoroughfare of Parliament Street down to West-

minster Hall, the lobby of the Senate and the Law Court. And we promise that, though the spot itself be unromantic, some most romantic echoes may be heard within its walls. Or, to make the matter still more easy, and we hope agreeable, our endeavour shall be to bring Westminster Hall to you, and while you retain your comfortable position by the fireside, you shall see the fine old building, more as it has been than as it is, and shall hear echoes of doings within its precincts, gay and grave—our pages serving the office of hill or mountains, in the reverberation of sounds which have long since been silent, but which we shall strive to reproduce for your instruction no less than your amusement.

To catch the earliest echoes, we must go a long way back into the night of time, further into the distant past than Norman or Saxon ages. Well, then, here we are on an island, or rather islet, covered with rushes, weeds, brushwood, and thorns, something like, only wilder and larger than, those bits of land that still peer out of the Thames, the refuge of the rat and water bird. It lies by the side of the old river, whose waters creep around it, and, untenanted at present by man, its only echoes are the croak of the frog or the cry of the lapwing. But there is some sort of human being coming near it now, with painted skin, like a South Sea islander, and paddling an odd sort of bark, neither boat nor canoe. It is no other than one of our venerable British forefathers, in his coracle, come out for a day's fishing; not, however, practising such tactics in his art as would entitle the worthy to hold place in the line of anglers wherein Isaac Walton appears in illustrious succession.

Without recording any of the words of the British fisherman—what he mutters over his nets and other fishing tackle, and which we do not in the least understand, and while the splashing of the oar dies away, as he takes his departure to some Celtic village not very far off—let us leap some ages further on to Saxon times, when we find monks very busy clearing away the rushes, and digging up stumps and roots. The foundation stones of an abbey and church are laid in this island, which they call Thorney; and now, in what had been a terrible place—in loco terribili—for the first time you hear axe and hammer; for, Sebert, king of the Saxons, having embraced Christianity, and having been baptized by Mellitus, Bishop of London, immediately builds a church to the honour of God and St. Peter on the west side of London. This is in the seventh century. And now there are echoes of worship, the chant of psalm and prayer, stealing over the star-lit waters of the Thames, while the illuminated altar pours its light through the rude windows. The building is heavy, rude, unadorned, with massive columns and round arches, such as one sees in mediæval MSS., or finds in lingering vestiges here and there in parts of our very oldest churches.

An odd story is told, in connexion with that first sound of axe and hammer, in the Isle of Thorney—a dreamy fiction—a poetical legend, the like of which may be heard at Venice and other places; and, though now rated at its real value, it was once believed, and, we doubt not, was often told, in days of yore, by the monks and other folks at

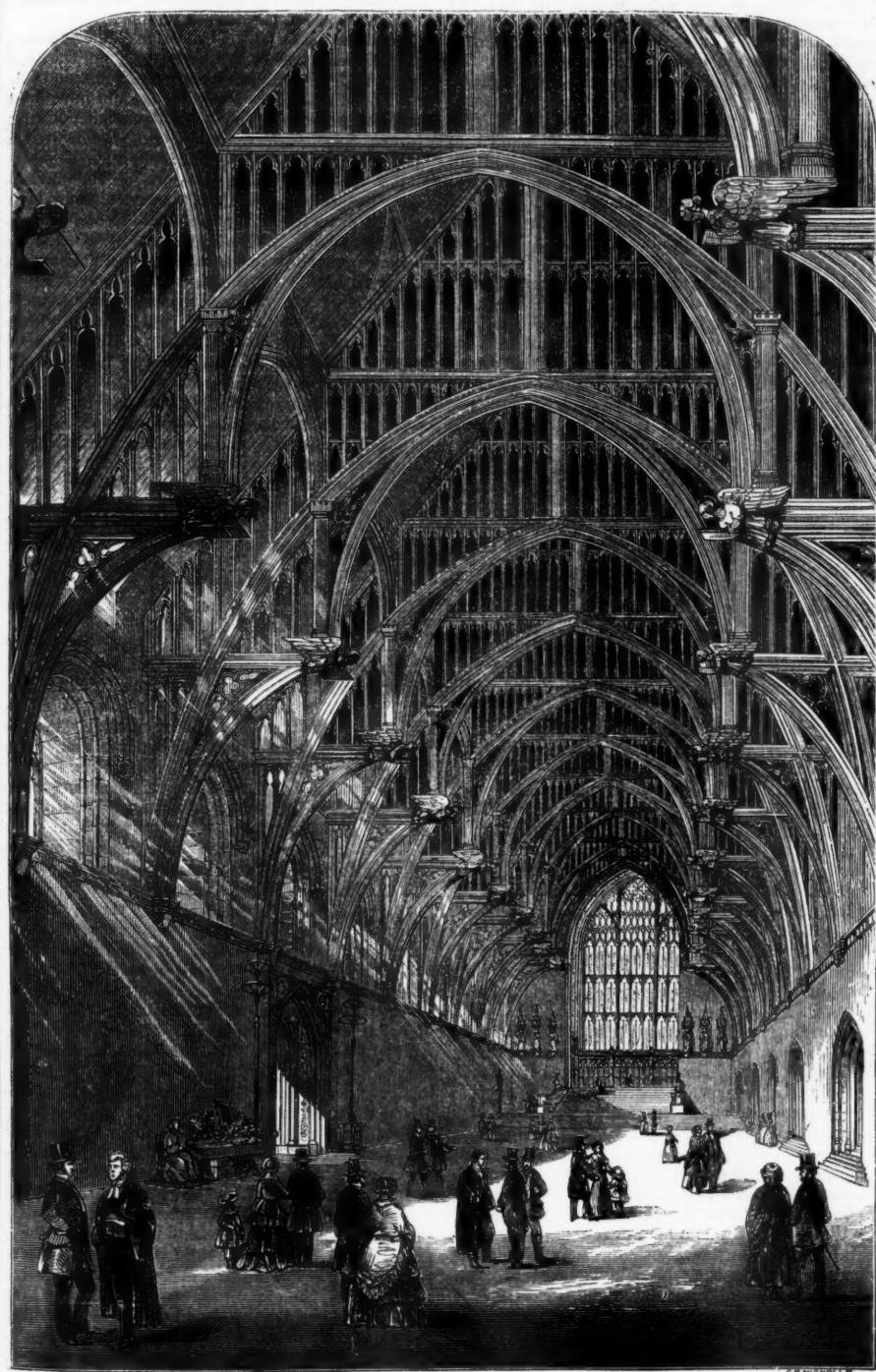
Westminster, as they gazed on the later glories of the Abbey Church, whose title, as Minster, gave name to the city. It runs as follows:—“A fisherman was met by a stranger on the opposite bank of the Thames, and requested to ferry him over, and wait on the side of the Isle of Thorney till he should return. Accompanied by a host of angels, this mysterious personage entered the new church and consecrated it by the light of a supernatural radiance, which filled the walls. The fisherman, startled at the sight of this illumination, trembled at the return of the wonderful priest, who now announced himself to be no other than the Apostle Peter, and told him to go at daybreak to Mellitus, the bishop, and assure him of the consecration. He further gave the fisherman a command to cast a net into the river, and to convey one of the fish to the bishop, assuring him that he should never want fish so long as he dedicated a tenth to the church. A miraculous draught was the consequence, and Mellitus, on examining the new edifice, found the proofs of the Apostle's visit in the marks of the extinguished tapers and of the chrism.”* So much for mediæval fables.

But our business is with Westminster Hall, not Westminster Abbey; yet a notice of the founding of the one seems proper as an introduction to the founding of the other, for it originally belonged to the palatial residence of the Saxon kings, which grew up under the shadow of the Abbey, when church and state were joined in closest bonds. In Canute's time, we find a kingly palace at Westminster, and many think that it was out of a window in this palace that Edric Streon, beheaded by order of the monarch, was cast into the Thames.

Axe and hammer are heard loudly enough at Westminster in the days of Edward the Confessor. The church and monastery are reconstructed; and we are not far off the truth if we add, that about the same time the palace was rebuilt, or enlarged and improved, as we have clear proof of the king's residence at Westminster. Heaps of stone, and plenty of scaffolding, and labourers in abundance, with all the buzz and activity which surround a rising edifice, are obvious enough on Thorney Island, which may now properly change its name. A pile of Saxon, or, more correctly, of Norman architecture—for Edward had a taste for and cultivated Norman art, and Matthew Paris speaks of the building as a new kind of construction—takes the place of thorns and briars, and earlier masonry and scenes of monastic magnificence and regal pomp blend together. Edward pressed on the work very earnestly, having appropriated to it a tenth of his entire substance in gold, silver, cattle, and all other possessions. In the new palatial abode, the confessor prince spends much of his time, holds counsels, seeks refreshment amid the cares of empire in religious meditation and prayer, has strange visions, and at last sickens and dies in the painted chamber—so tradition says.

The Norman came and took possession of this kingly home. The first William left it to the second. There was, no doubt, some large hall for state and festival all along; but now we meet for the first time with the *Great Hall*, which, altered,

* “London in Ancient and Modern Times.”



WESTMINSTER HALL, AS IT IS.

G.P.NICHOLLS.

indeed reconstructed, may, however, be said still to remain. There are faint relics of its Norman character in the outer walls, in the plain thin buttress, and the string course level with the window-sills, which the works of a later period did not efface. Rufus had gigantic architectural ideas, if we are to believe the story told by Matthew Paris. The red-haired king came home from Normandy, and held his court in the New Hall. The warriors, barons, and squires thought it very vast, and expressed their wonder at so grand a place. "It is not half so large," quoth he of the red hair, "as it should have been: it is only a bed-chamber compared with what I intend to build." What he meant to build no one knows; probably he did not know himself. Certainly his subjects would not have wished him to carry out any further these extravagant notions of what befitted a kingly abode; "for already," as Fabian says, "he filled the spiritualtie and temporaltie with unreasonable tasks and tributes, the which he spent upon the Tower of London and the making of Westminster Hall."

Time rolls on; Rufus dies, and a long line of kings after him. There are divers architectural and other artistic works in Westminster; stone-cutters, and painters, and carvers of wood, ply their toils in adorning the royal chambers; and the Great Hall, of course, comes in for some share in the outlay of skill and money; for it is often used, and one would think, from what we shall see hereafter, somewhat roughly. But we have no particular account of changes in structure and decoration till we arrive at the reign of Richard II., when axe and hammer are heard again more loudly than ever.

The present Westminster Hall is the work of that unjust and unhappy monarch. When the decorated style was prevalent—when Gothic in England was in its glory and perfection—when the spring-tide of early English had ripened into summer beauty, before the rich but decaying autumn season of the perpendicular order had set in—the mason piled up the walls and ornamented flying buttresses, and the carpenter threw over them the broad oaken roof of cunning work, and the carver shaped the mullions and transoms of the magnificent end-window. A building of rare grandeur is this Westminster Hall even at the present day, though it lacks the beautiful carving and rows of statues with which it was once adorned: a sight of exceeding splendour it must have been on days of royal festival, when the space of seventy-four feet in breadth, and two hundred and seventy in length—the roof of one span, with no columns to support it—was covered with the gorgeous retinue of a mediæval monarch. It was two years in building, and the expense was defrayed out of moneys levied on strangers and exiles, who, on payment of these demands, obtained licence to remain in the English realm. "John Boterell being clerk of the works." So that England was a land of refuge then as now—a home for the homeless—a sanctuary for the oppressed and for the criminal, yielding a precious boon, not without some inconvenience and even evil, but the latter far less than the former; only in Richard's time people had to pay for what they may now get free; and Westminster Hall thus becomes to us a monument of the unchanging

sacredness of our old English soil, and of despotic exactions now happily known no longer.

While we listen to the echo of axe and hammer, as Richard's workmen are engaged on the new Great Hall, a novel scene occurs just outside of it. Parliaments meet at Westminster, and have been wont to assemble in this large old chamber of king Rufus; but now that the building is for a while unfit for use, a temporary shed adjoining it is employed for the English senators. The place is open at both ends and sides, that people may hear and see all that is going on; and "to secure freedom of debate," as we are told, 4000 Cheshire archers with bent bows, and arrows notched to shoot, surround the house. And so parliament men, in the reign of king Richard II., appear the mere tools of his despotism; but it is only for a little while. Our constitution in the hands of brave Englishmen cannot so be permanently crushed, and therefore, not long afterwards, in the very hall now approaching its completion, Barons and Commons pluck the crown from the head of the foolish and misguided tyrant. The hall was completed before Christmas, 1398, when festival was kept in it with right royal splendour and extravagance, with "every day's justing and running at the tilt, whereunto resorted such a number of people that there was every day spent xxv or xxviii oxen, and ccc sheep, besides fowl without number. Also the king caused a garment for himself to be made of gold, silver, and precious stones, to the value of 3000 marks."

A long pause in the architectural history of Westminster Hall here follows. No great changes take place in the building till our own time. Axe and hammer have, indeed, often been heard in the building; but they have been employed in the construction of scaffolding and benches and other appurtenances connected with coronations, festivities, and state trials of which this hall has been the theatre, and to notices of which the subsequent papers will be devoted.

Never since the thorns were cleared out of Thorney Island have there been such architectural works going on there as have proceeded for some years past without yet attaining their completion. In spite of defects, which it is easy to point out, the new Houses of Parliament form a pile of buildings of great beauty and magnificence. With them we have nothing to do in this sketch, save as Westminster Hall forms one of their grand entrances. It is now, in fact, a gigantic porch to the two houses. Axe and hammer, under Mr. Barry's design and superintendence, have somewhat changed the hall of the second Richard. No more fitted for banqueting, the wall and window where the dais once stood have been removed, and a noble flight of steps now occupy their place, connected with a vestibule or gallery, through which you pass into the senate chambers of the nation. An enormous arch spans the ascending steps, and behind is a huge window, proportioned to the architectural magnitudes around it. On the left hand side of these truly royal stairs is another archway cut through the wall, leading into a profusely decorated corridor, ending in the lobby of the House of Commons.

In other respects, the hall remains as it was, leaving ample scope for genius and taste, while

preserving intact its ancient features, to enrich the venerable halls, and even relieve the broad surface of the floor, with monuments and memorials of men and deeds, which have given a fame to the place far surpassing what anything merely artistic can confer. Nowhere, within the same number of square feet, do such hosts of memories, born on the spot, come starting up to challenge and instruct, to interest and awe, to delight and confound the well-instructed and thoughtful visitor. The antiquary, the lawyer, the statesman, the philosopher, are here all reminded of something associated with their own studies; and such as aspire to none of these titles, but have only average intelligence, and kinship with human kind, and a heart to feel for the joys and sorrows of bye-gone ages, may here gather lessons of moral wisdom, and learn the vanity of earthly things, and take warning from the ways of ambition, and smile and weep by turns as the pageant and the trial in this strange phantasmagoria of English historical romance here in succession come and flit away. To catch echoes of the past, as they come and go, will be our endeavour for the next few weeks; and among them we shall strive especially to seize and fix on those which proceed from royal feastings—men of the marble chair-bench and bar—old politics and parliaments—early state trials—the seven bishops—and an Indian viceroy.

WATER AGAIN.

In a former paper on the water supply of the metropolis,* we described the means and machinery now in course of preparation for purifying the fluid drawn from the Thames and other sources for the use of the inhabitants. We stated then, that in the course of the investigations made by order of the House of Commons, some suggestive facts had been brought to light, to which we should take occasion to revert. Our limits, however, confine us to the notice of those only which are of the most importance, and which, bearing on what we conceive to be the true principles of water supply, cannot be passed over.

The first fact demanding notice has an important bearing on the suppression of conflagrations in the metropolis. From the testimony of Mr. Braithwood, it appears that the earliest moment at which water can be poured on a fire by the fire-brigade, after its discovery, is about twenty-eight minutes, supposing the fire to be not more than a mile from the nearest station. The consequence is, that the fire has attained such force before the water comes, that property on fire is rarely saved, and all that can be done is to prevent the spread of the conflagration. If a constant supply of water were readily available, so as to be applied by the nearest policeman, the case would be widely different. Mark how the emergency is met in Hamburg at the present moment. Mr. Lindley, the engineer under whose direction that city was rebuilt after the terrible conflagration that laid it waste, gives evidence to this effect: "In Hamburg we have plugs along the mains at intervals

of forty yards. When a fire occurs, a hose is screwed on in two minutes, and a water-jet, equivalent in power to eight engines, is at once introduced *inside* the house where the fire is raging. There have been repeated fires in the city since it was rebuilt, but they have all been extinguished immediately; twenty minutes' delay might have made them extensive conflagrations." Now, is there any reason, we should like to know, why the same powerful means of extinguishing fire should not lie at our own doors. To say nothing of the saving of life, it is evident that the saving of property alone would speedily repay the expense of similar arrangements.

In addition to the advantage derivable in case of fire from a ready access to water, London would obtain what it has always wanted hitherto—the means of surface-cleansing. Our street-orderlies at present only perform a fraction of their work, and that from want of the means of cleanliness. A number of experiments have been made of surface-cleansing by means of the water-jet; and it has been satisfactorily shown that if the required preparations for this purpose were made by the water companies, the work of the scavenger might be accomplished in one-third of the time that it now takes, and with a degree of efficiency now never witnessed. Mr. Lovick calculates that, upon a general average, one penny per house would defray the cost of washing the streets twice a week. How great is the need for a thorough system of surface-cleansing, our readers do not require to be informed—they have but to turn for a moment out of the main line of traffic into any one of the narrow lanes or courts that disembogue into it, to acquire abundant information on that subject.

Another fact which has come to light, which was long unsuspected by the great water dispensers, and which even now they treat as a fallacy, is the fact that a constant supply of water to the inhabitants of the metropolis would cost far less in the distribution, and draw a less quantity from the reservoirs, than the present intermittent supply. In a previous paper we showed, on the authority of the report of the Board of Health, that of the water at present sent through pipes into London, amounting to about 150 gallons per house per day, above two-thirds runs to waste, and instead of contributing to cleanliness and health, is in very truth a fertile medium of filth and disease. This waste, it is plain, is consequent upon the intermittent supply, which necessitates the keeping of cisterns and water-butts, and the employment of an army of coopers and plumbers, whose work is not and cannot be efficiently performed. It further necessitates the support of an establishment of turncocks on the part of the companies, who might dispense with the services of such men and save their salaries by the constant supply system. The experiment has already been tried in some of our provincial towns with perfect success. Thus, at Ashton-under-Lyne, Mr. Coulthart informs us, that the opinions he held as to the superior economy of a continuous supply of water over an intermittent supply have been fully confirmed by experience. Not only does the continuous supply save the expense of tanks, ball-taps, and turncocks' wages, but it secures a saving of

* "Leisure Hour," No. 211.

the water, the expenditure of which, under that system, is not more than forty gallons, on the average, per house per day. In Wolverhampton the constant supply system also prevails, and the water company acknowledge that they have profited largely by its adoption.

But economy, after all, is a secondary object compared with the public health, and for sanitary reasons the intermittent system should be abolished by law. The medical men examined on this matter are unanimous in their assertion that water kept in tanks or butts in houses or back-yards, even for a few days, must inevitably become charged with material impurities as well as aerated with foul air. But how stands the case? Do many of our readers get their cistern or water-butts cleaned out once in six months? Do the generality of persons ever think of such a thing at all, until it is forced upon their attention by some disagreeable flavour in the water? We fear not. We go on drinking from a tank or a butt which is filled twice or thrice a week, but which is *never* empty, and into which whatever flows to-day mingles with what may have been there one, two, five, seven years ago! In sober truth, the intermittent system is necessarily and intrinsically foul and poisonous, and would not be tolerated a day by a community sensibly alive to the value of cleanliness and health; and until, indeed, the system of constant supply be adopted, all the elaborate and expensive measures now in progress will fail in producing the desired effect. If, in addition to the supply being constant, it be distributed under a powerful pressure, the jet of water may be applied to mechanical and manufacturing purposes, and made to supersede the use of small steam-engines such as are used in warehouses for packing, in printing-offices, and in grocers' shops and cellars for the grinding of coffee, etc. It is our belief that more water is wasted under the present system than would subserve all these purposes, and in so doing bring a large additional revenue to the several companies.

But the most important fact elicited by the inquiries and experiments of successive committees remains to be noticed—and that is, that of all the water supplied to London by the several companies, there is none that is thoroughly recommendable for domestic use. The reason is, that it is all river or pond water, averaging or approaching to sixteen degrees of hardness, and is not, on that account, either wholesome for drinking, desirable for cooking, or efficient for washing. We shall glance at it briefly in these three points of view, through the optic glasses of those best qualified to judge.

And first, as to the insalubrity of hard water. We might go back to the times of Hippocrates or Celsus, and trace the opinions of the faculty up to the present day, and we should find them all condemnatory of the use of hard water as a beverage. We prefer, however, to quote modern authorities. Says Dr. Sutherland: "My attention has been for a length of time called to the fact that the continued use of hard water has a peculiar effect on the digestive functions. * * * I have arrived at the conclusion that in a certain class of constitutions hard water tends to produce visceral obstructions, that it diminishes the natural secretions, produces

a constipated or irregular state of the bowels, and consequently deranges the health." Dr. Heberden attributes to the use of hard water, "pains in the stomach and bowels, glandular tumours, costiveness where the simple limestone prevails, and diarrhoea where much of it is united with acids." Dr. Leech, of Glasgow, says, in reference to the constant supply of soft water by the Gorbals Gravitation Waterworks: "It is the unanimous opinion of the medical profession that great benefits had followed in the substitution of soft water on the principle of constant supply. Since this change urinary diseases are fewer, especially those attended by the deposition of gravel, and dyspeptic complaints are diminished in number." Dr. Leech further states that, during the late visitation of cholera, the south side of Glasgow, which enjoys a constant supply of soft water, escaped with comparative impunity, while the north side, which is served on a different system, suffered severely. The testimony of these four witnesses must suffice. Did our space permit, we could easily multiply them by forty.

On the second point we shall be content with the single testimony of M. Soyer. Says this celebrated *maitre de cuisine*: "Hard water shrivels greens and peas; it gives to cabbage, spinach, and asparagus a yellow tinge; and it takes one-fourth more time and fuel to boil than soft water. In the case of meat, hard water has a prejudicial effect, and does not open the pores so freely as soft water; the effect is worst on delicate meats, such as chicken or lamb; hard water compresses the pores, whilst soft water dilates them and the succulent matter they contain. Soft water is of the greatest importance in making the best bread, which by its use is rendered lighter and whiter than when made with hard water. In regard to tea, hard water is injurious in deteriorating the flavour; it also requires more tea to give an equal strength. The same quantity of tea which will produce three cups with hard water, gives five cups with soft water. On all the tea consumed in the metropolis, the use of hard water incurs an extra expenditure of one-third. I consider that the action of water on tea is a fair test and representative of its action on meat and vegetables in general, in all the delicate processes of cookery. As to meat, soft water extracts the juice or gravy quickly and well, but hard water, instead of opening the meat, seems to draw it closer and to solidify the gluten, and I believe that the true flavour of the meat cannot be extracted by hard water." M. Soyer gives much more testimony of a similar kind, and his opinions are corroborated by those of Mr. Philip Holland and Professor Clark.

With respect to the third point, we need only consult the washerwoman, who is too well aware of the tyranny of hard water not to desire a supply of soft. But even the washerwoman is ignorant of the full extent of the evil from which she suffers. The fact is, the interest of the laundress is larger than that of the manufacturer of the linen she washes. A shirt that costs two shillings to make, wants and gets ten shillings' worth of washing before it is worn out. It is calculated that about one thousand tons of soap are used in London per month, and it is proved by repeated experiment that more than half the whole quantity

is wasted in consequence of using hard water instead of soft. But the waste or loss does not end here; the hard water requires twice the time and twice the labour, and of course twice the wages of labour; and last, and worst of all, it involves double the wear and tear and destruction of the materials washed. It is found by experiment that, taking all things into the account, as much washing can be got through with soft water at the expense of 5s. 3d., as would cost 10s. 10d. with hard water. When we call to mind that in London the sum of five millions sterling is annually paid for washing, we may form some notion of the degree in which the public suffer by the absence of a continuous supply of soft water. Unhappily, indispensable as it would appear to be, that the metropolis should enjoy a constant supply of soft water, that desideratum is not for the present likely to be obtained. There is no other source in the neighbourhood of London, for the supply of such a quantity of soft water as would be required, save such as might be created by draining the rainfall from the surface of immense gathering grounds. It is estimated that an area of not less than one hundred and fifty square miles should be appropriated for this purpose; and various surveys by well-qualified engineers have been made with a view to the obtaining of accurate data for calculation before proceeding to experiment. According to the Hon. W. Napier, the district geologically known as the Surrey Sands offers all that is needed, and would yield forty millions of gallons daily of water admirably adapted to the public wants. But it would take many years to perfect the drainage of so vast an area, and nothing short of positive proof that the supply, when once collected, would be continuously maintained, would justify the abandonment of the present sources. The transition, therefore, from the use of hard water to the use of soft water in London, will be necessarily a work of time: that it will eventually take place we cannot entertain a doubt; nor do we doubt, either, that as an engineering speculation it would prove highly remunerative.

Meanwhile the question of immediate interest is that of *Constant Supply*. Will the companies, the writer would ask, in all friendliness of spirit, when the gigantic works now in course of construction are completed, still continue to inflict the double injury of destruction to life and property by a waste of two-thirds of the water? Will they still pay salaries to turncocks, and submit to the destruction of their pipes by oxydation,* and by the hydraulic shocks which have been known to shatter the strongest iron tubes? Will they still compel us to keep tanks and water-

butts, and the poor to hoard water till it is pestilential in their stifling dormitories? or will they allow us to quaff it fresh and sparkling from the suburban reservoirs? And lastly, will they see that the poor man has his share of the indispensable fluid as well as the rich—a desideratum which he will never obtain, so long as the system of intermittent supply subjects him or his struggling landlord to the expense of tank, cistern, ball-cock, and plumber's bills? The time is at hand when these questions will be practically answered: the public have but to utter their voices to determine whether the response be in their favour or otherwise.

THE LITTLE WHITE PEBBLE, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

It was during the height of the theatrical season at Munich, in 1795, that one evening a pale young man took a prominent part in a new piece. His mournful looks and spiritless actions were so utterly at variance with the drolleries he had to say, that, being unmercifully hissed by the spectators, he was peremptorily dismissed by the enraged manager, who was unfortunately the composer of the unsuccessful comedy. Little did they think, and as little did they care, that in a wretched garret lay the cold remains of his once dear father; that five little brothers and sisters and a desolate widow looked up to him as their only hope and support; or that, so deep was his poverty, he could buy neither food for the living, nor a coffin for the dead. Picture, then, his intense grief when, with a few crowns in his pocket, the result of his dismissal, he leaves the theatre, gives his humble order at the undertaker's, buys bread for his starving family, and staggers to his comfortless home. He looks back upon the past and he sees only misfortune and failure; he tries to dream of the future, but, alas! there is neither encouragement nor hope. Then see him, watching all the long lone night by his father's corpse, and following it to the grave in the morning; track him as he listlessly saunters through the streets, and idly wanders on the banks of the river; mark him, watching the flowing water, till, hard pressed by misfortune, the terrible thought of suicide enters his poor harassed brain; then observe him shudder at the guilty thought, fall on his knees to beg for mercy and forgiveness, till at last, worn out by fatigue and anxiety, he sinks down on the soft grass—to sleep.

The still night has hushed all nature into quiet; and as the drowsy winds howl softly round the resting-place of grief, and the murmuring waters chant a low wail of sympathy with the sufferer's woe, there seems, as if in answer to the prayer of anguish he had uttered, to arise from those dark waters, which but an hour or two before whispered to him dire despair, an angel of deliverance, which, as it gently hovers over the sleeping unfortunate, appears to scatter blessings from its gracious wings, and by its magic touch bids hope gush forth from the hard cold rock.

Soon the merry chirping of birds and the cheerful rays of the morning sun arouse the sleeper.

* "Corrosion in pipes takes place only under the intermittent supply, by the action of the atmosphere on the pipe in a damp state. An iron pipe constantly charged will not corrode at all, whether the water be hard or soft, and will last at least four times as long as a pipe where the air is admitted into it." So says Mr. J. Stirling, of Paisley. As a comment upon this, we would point to the metal statuary in the waterworks of Versailles. These figures have been, many of them, half submerged in water ever since the days of Louis XIV. The parts above water have simply suffered by common oxydation: the parts totally submerged remain nearly perfect; while those parts at the water-line, which have been undergoing the alternations of wet and dry, as the water rose and fell, during a hundred years, have been cut through as though severed by a saw, and have been obliged to be re-joined by soldering.

Refreshed and thankful at heart that he is still living, he prepares to return to the city. His attention, however, is arrested by a smooth white chalk-stone on which are traced the delicate fibres of a sprig of moss. He remembers that, the evening before, his tears fell on this very stone, and moistened the moss; some wandering bird or playful gust of wind have borne the plant far away; but there is its impress exquisitely pencilled on the white surface of the stone. Struck by the phenomenon, we hear the young German say, as he picks up the fair pebble and wends his way to the city: "This means something; Providence has not deserted me; I am a bad actor, a bad singer, but who knows, I may be reserved for something better."

Here let the curtain fall upon the vision. It did mean something; that white pebble was a fragment of the now celebrated Bavarian Lithographic Stone, and that pale young man was Aloise Senefelder, the inventor of lithography. Remember, then, oh young man, when, beset by troubles and difficulties, you are tempted to despair, remember the poor actor of Munich, and be assured that he who bade the trickling tears of grief imprint the light sporus upon the fair limestone, is ready to hear you in the hour of your sadness, and can open up to all who truly seek him a way of escape from trouble.

To the true Christian especially, when in trouble, the lines of a modern writer will always apply:—

"Never go gloomily, man with a mind,
Hope is a better companion than fear;
Providence, ever benignant and kind,
Gives with a smile what you take with a tear:
All will be right,
Look to the light,
Morning is over the daughter of night,
All that was black will be all that is bright:
Cheerily, cheerily, then! cheer up." TUPPER.

Abandoning his former profession, Senefelder became an author; being too poor, however, to pay for the printer's labour in publishing his manuscripts, he set about trying to print for himself. In the course of his experiments, he found that soap, wax, and lampblack made a good composition for writing on copper; he then used strong nitric acid to eat away a portion of the copper and leave the letters in relief; these sheets he then printed. But as writing backwards was not easy, and as copper was not cheap, he was led to make further experiments on the stone from the banks of the Isere. This he polished and used instead of copper. One day, whilst thus employed, his mother came into his workroom and requested him to take account of some linen which was going to the washerwoman. Not having a scrap of paper or a drop of ink at hand, he hastily wrote out the list with his prepared ink upon a polished stone, intending to copy it at leisure. When he was going to wipe the writing from the stone, the idea struck him that he might take impressions from it; having bit the stone gently with acid, so as to leave the letters a little prominent, he found, after charging it with ink, that he could take impressions easily upon renewing the ink for each print. Experimenting further, he soon saw that it was not essential to leave the

letters raised, but that the simple principle of grease resisting water was sufficient. Here was the true secret of lithography. The calcareous stone has, strange to say, a strong affinity or liking for both grease and water; while, as is well known, grease and water have for one another quite as decided an antipathy. Working upon this simple principle, Senefelder, by drawing or writing subjects upon the stone with fatty substances, produced some good specimens. The stone, imbibing greedily the grease, fixed the subject upon its surface; this being damped with a wet cloth, till the whole face of the stone was covered, except where the greasy lines resisted the water, a roller of proper printing-ink was passed over the stone. Those parts upon which the water was standing, would necessarily resist the ink, and it would only be received by the oily lines of the subject. When fully charged with ink, a paper was laid upon it, and by the application of a scraping pressure from above, the print was produced.

This was lithography in its early days, and the fundamental principles remain the same; but as this art is so seriously affected by the most delicate niceties in chemistry, and the slightest variations in the weather, it is not to be wondered at that Senefelder met with innumerable difficulties, things not at all uncommon even now-a-days. With astonishing perseverance, however, he battled with his daily trials, until, in 1799, he obtained a patent to practise in Bavaria, and he afterwards attempted to set up presses in London, Paris, and Vienna. It soon spread through Germany and France, and, being taken up by clever artists, rapidly attained excellence. In 1800, it was introduced into England, and in 1819, the stout-hearted Senefelder, with characteristic candour and public spirit, divulged all his secrets, and published his receipts, hoping, as he says, "that it might produce many excellent lithographers."

Subsequently Hullmandel, who studied chemistry under Faraday, worked with great success, and invented tinting and the use of the brush upon stone, commonly called lithotint. From his studio, by the pencils of Cattermole, Roberts, Harding, Haghe, and others, some of the most exquisite specimens of modern art have been sent out, and now London alone, besides heaps of minor presses, can boast of many master establishments. It is but forty years ago since painters, engravers, and connoisseurs, with most active tongues vilified the struggling art, and cautioned the public against "greasy and smutty daubs," and wise-heads in high quarters ventured to say that "it was all very well in its way, only it must be kept within its proper limits." The interval has, however, turned the tables, and lithography, as a useful, cheap, and elegant art, has taken a position which engraving never could. For not only does it send out the merchant's letter in his own handwriting, and furnish the whole paper paraphernalia of the counting-house at a cheap rate; not only does it descend into all the common necessities of everyday life; but it gives us the finest subjects of the best artists, crisp from their own hands and bearing the real touches of their own pencils. Nor is this all, for it gives, further, colour, and it inter-

prets faithfully every tint and gradation of shade, and transmits them, fresh from the painter's easel, to multiplied copies, every one of which is a true facsimile of the original.

Contrast, then, in your mind, 1795 and 1856. Look, on the one hand, at unfortunate Senefelder, and then on the other, at the numerous professors of his art at the present day; look, on the one side, at the little white fragment of limestone, and on the other, at the "quarry" of stones, which in one establishment alone weighs several hundred tons; look at the clumsy press that first threw off a sheet from stone at Munich, and then look at the elegant machines of modern days, some of which are wrought by steam; and thus learn that important and cheering lesson—to bear up bravely even although troubles thicken fast and perplexities seem to extinguish hope. For, to use Senefelder's own words: "Why should we ever despair? God can turn our pain into pleasure, and our bitterness into joy."

THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

O CHRISTMAS TREE, that yester night
So many glittering tapers bore,
With trails of silver dropping light,
Like slender veins of precious ore:
A pennon crowned thy topmost shoot,
Gay mimic birds about thee clung,
And all thy branches weighed with fruit
Of fairy gifts for old and young.

It was a jocund sight to see
The glory of that Christmas tree.

The little children screamed for joy,
And thought the glare would last for aye,
So bounteons of each favourite toy,
So brilliant in its lamps' array:
But ah! the candles flickered low,
The trinket-blossoms one by one
Were plucked, and that resplendent show
Sank darkly as the setting sun.
It was a mournful sight to see
The darkness of that Christmas tree.

Let's point a moral for the time,
A moral for the dying year;
That glory was our early prime,
That darkness our declension drear.
We saw a feigned evergreen,
With magic blaze and glittering store,
And, like the children, said, "We ween
This light will last our lives and more."
So utterly befooled were we
By youth's deceitful Christmas tree.

But soon its shallow lamps were spent,
Its sparkling branches stript and bare,
Its trails of silver tissue rent,
And scattered all its blossoms fair:
Youth's pleasant gifts, a dazzling band,
Illusions bright, adventurous joys,
All broken in the world's rough hand,
As children break their fragile toys.
And thus we found youth proved to be,
This naked, leafless Christmas tree.

POEMS BY MRS. D. OGILVY.

* * * In contrast to the sentiment expressed in these beautiful lines, we may add—

"When youth is devoted to God,
And its years have past usefully by,
We may learn to look back on its road,
Nor remember its flight with a sigh."

REALITIES TO COME.

LET me stir you up to aim at a lively conviction of the real existence of heaven, and the certainty of a coming judgment. It is not easy to get this. We are creatures of present scenes and present moments. The distant and future have but little power over us, amazingly little when we recollect that we are to live in the future and go to the distant. Talk to us of the coming of Christ, and the rising of the dead, and the gathering together of the world, and the opening of hell and heaven—most of us must feel that these things seem to us as ideal and visionary; our minds do not grasp them. But these things are realities, or soon will be such, and very solemn realities. Think for a little. The ocean on our earth is in existence, though you do not see it; it is beating now on many a shore, though you do not hear it. If you had never seen the ocean, you would find it difficult to form as you sit there any distinct notion of it. It is the same with eternal and heavenly things. They also are in existence; they also are real, though they seem to you as unreal. You must not yield to this infirmity of your nature, or you will one day find out your error. You must not give yourselves up to the present things, for you are soon going away from present things. What will you do when you wake up and find all gone but heaven and hell? A trifle will place you in this situation. In a day or an hour you may be there. Blame not me then for so often trying to lead your thoughts forward. Rather blame yourselves that they do not of themselves go forward; rather pray that God the Holy Ghost may carry them forward. Oh that our minds could ever live in futurity! Oh that we could think as dying men ought to think of the world we shall soon be in! The distant, the unseen, the eternal—these really are the things which most concern us, brethren. Our home lies among them. We shall one day be as familiar with them as we now are with the scenes among which we are now moving. Oh let us try to regard ourselves as very near them! Let us try to live in the daily anticipation of them. Then are our minds in a right state, when we can say with St. Paul, "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."—*Bradley's Practical Sermons.*

MOMENTOUS INQUIRIES.

THERE is a God. He preserves, and he can destroy you. Do you daily think of him?

You have a soul. Do you care for it? You care for your body, but do you properly care for your soul?

You are a sinner. Do you know how a sinner can be saved?

There is a Saviour. Are you anxious that he may save you?

There is an awful hell. Are you seeking to escape it?

There is a glorious heaven. Are you in the way to it?

You must soon die. Are you prepared for the solemn change?

You must appear at the judgment seat of Christ? What will then be your lot?

There is an eternal state after death. Is yours likely to be an eternity of bliss? or an eternity of woe?

You must be pardoned through the blood of Christ, and sanctified by the Spirit of God, or you cannot be saved. Are you daily seeking these blessings?

"Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Are you living a holy life?

There is a Book able to inform you on these subjects, and to make you wise unto salvation. Do you search the Scriptures? *

* The above can be had in a separate and cheap form for distribution, under the title of "SERIOUS QUESTIONS."

Varieties.

HOW TO MANAGE BUSINESS.—The following advertisement appeared in the "New York Herald":—"Aaron Tomkins begs to return his thanks to the many friends who have patronised his stores, and begs a repetition of their favours, and to inform them he has made 14,000 dollars by this year's trade; and to prevent any questions being asked, he begs to tell them how he made it. He made 7000 dollars by attending to his own business, and 7000 by letting other people's business alone."

WHY DREW HURTS SHEEP.—From time immemorial it has been a precept with careful shepherds not to let the sheep turn out upon the dewy grass, or graze in damp and marshy regions. Why was the dew of the morning, so dear to poets, considered dangerous to sheep? No one could tell—least of all the bucolic guardian; but if he could not tell you *why* it was so, he averred that it was so. And now Science comes with a very simple explanation to justify the empirical precept. Siebold, the great comparative anatomist, has given the *rationale* in his curious treatise on Entozoa. Many of the creatures pass the early portion of their predatory existences in the bodies of one species of animal, and their maturity in another. The eggs are deposited in these latter domiciles, but not developed there: they have to be expelled; and the dear little innocents, either as eggs or embryos, are cast upon the wide world to shift for themselves. But how? There they lie on the smoking dungheaps; and far away roam the sheep in whose lungs and liver they alone can develop themselves, and find food; what chance have they? This chance. The rain washes them into the earth, or the farmer flings them in manure upon the soil. The humidity serves to develop them; they fix themselves against the moist grass; the sheep nibble the grass, and with it carry these tiny entozoa into their stomachs: once there the business is soon accomplished! Thus it is that the dewy grass is dangerous. Thus it is that damp seasons are so prejudicial to sheep, multiplying the diseases of lungs and liver to which these animals are subject; whereas in the dry hot seasons such diseases are rare, because the entozoa have been desiccated.

LIFE WITHOUT LOVE.—We sometimes meet with men who seem to think that any indulgence in an affectionate feeling is a weakness. They will return from a journey, and greet their families with a distant dignity, and move among their children with the cold and lofty splendour of an iceberg surrounded by its broken fragments. There is hardly a more unnatural sight on earth than one of those families without a heart. A father had better extinguish a boy's eyes than take away his heart. Who that has experienced the joys of friendship, and values sympathy and affection, would not rather lose all that is beautiful in nature's scenery than be robbed of the hidden treasure of his heart? Cherish, then, your heart's best affections. Indulge in the warm and gushing emotions of filial, parental, and fraternal love.

OUR PRESENT AND OUR FUTURE LIFE.—Nothing in this world, either in its design or in its results, is ultimate; all is preliminary and preparatory. We are only walking on the shore of the boundless ocean of existence. There is a far closer connexion between our present and our future life than most persons imagine, or than most reflect upon. Moral habits formed in time receive, all of them, whether good or bad, the stamp of eternity—so says the Book of God, and every one of us passes at the hour of death under the confirming power of that awful and irrevocable sentence, "He that is holy let him be holy still, and he that is filthy let him be filthy still." Death effects no moral change; obliterates no vice, imparts no virtue; but upon every unbroken habit of evil, as well as upon every firm habit of good, affixes the signature of these awful words, "for ever."—*Rev. John Angell James.*

WHAT TO DO WITH STREET BEGGARS.—An intelligent lady was in the habit of having a sedulously blackened place on her side-pavement, which she required each applicant of charity to scrub off—the process being one which usually required half an hour's hard work—before she would relieve their wants.

PERILS OF THE RAIL IN AMERICA.—The rays of the sun never penetrate the forest, and evening was deepening the gloom of the artificial twilight, when gradually we became enveloped in a glare redder and fiercer than that of moonlight; and looking ahead I saw the forest on fire, and that we were rushing into the flames. "Close the windows, there's a fire ahead," said the conductor; and after obeying this common-place direction, many of the passengers returned to the slumbers which had been so unseasonably disturbed. On, on we rushed—the flames encircled us round—we were enveloped in clouds of stifling smoke—crack, crash went the trees—a blazing stem fell across the line—the fender of the engine pushed it aside—the flames hissed like tongues of fire, and then, leaping like serpents, would rush up to the top of the largest tree, and it would blaze like a pine knot. There seemed no egress; but in a few minutes the raging, roaring conflagration was left behind. A forest on fire from a distance looks very much like "Punch's" picture of a naval review; a near view is the height of sublimity. The dangers of the cars, to my inexperience, seemed by no means over with the escape from being roasted alive. A few miles from Cleveland they rushed down a steep incline, apparently into Lake Erie, but in reality upon a platform supported on piles, so narrow that the edges of the cars hung over it, so that I saw nothing but water. A gale was blowing, and drove the surf upon the platform, and the spray against the windows, giving such a feeling of insecurity that for a moment I wished myself in one of our "coon sentry boxes."—*Englishwoman in America.*

THE JUG WITHOUT A BOTTOM.—On the bridge that crossed the Grand Rapids, we met a half old man and his wife, with eleven sons, seven daughters, and thirty-seven grandchildren, with numerous horses, calves, sheep, and furniture of antiquated appearance; among which were to be seen cradles for babies, cradles for grain, spinning-wheels, pots, and kettles, and almost everything requisite for a settlement such as fifty blood relations will make in Grand River country. After the train stopped, we made some inquiries, and asked the old gentleman what use could be made of a bottomless jug, which was carefully stowed away among his domestic equipments, and received the following reply. "Why, sir, I am a man of many years, and have worked other people's land all my days, and paid from four to nine bushels of wheat per acre for doing it; and have all the time used a jug with a bottom to it, by which all my profits have been wasted, and I was sick of feeding both landlord and rum-seller. So I sent seven of my boys to Mexico to fight for their country. They all got back safe, and bought seven sections of land, that will be mine without rent. And now this jug that you see shall hold all the whisky and rum that will be used in my whole family while I control them. Old General Taylor told my son John that a jug without a bottom was the best kind of a jug to put liquor in, and I believe it."—*American Paper.*

VALUE OF EDITORIAL TIME IN SYDNEY.—The author of an article descriptive of life in Australia, thus describes his visit to an editor in Sydney:—"At my first call, I came to the palace-like house, the ground floor occupied by the printing-office. On the first floor, among other advertisements, I found a tablet informing visitors that the editor cannot be spoken with unless paid for his valuable time; accordingly everybody, without exception, is advised to buy a ticket of admission at the door of the waiting-room—one hour costing 10s., half an hour 6s., fifteen minutes 3s. Such were the contents of this singular price-current of time."

He that can compose himself is wiser than he that composes books.

He that has wit and learning should add wisdom and modesty.

He that loses his conscience has nothing left worth keeping.